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Athenian News: OR, Dunton's Oracle.

From Saturday *September* the 2d, to Tuesday *September* the 5th, 1710.

A House to be Let: *Or the* Widow's Post; *being a most remarkable Account of a Woman now living at* Maidstone *in* Kent, *that has bury'd Nine Husbands, and has lately marry'd a Tenth.*

Mr. Dunton,

I find many remarkable Occurrences in your Weekly Oracle, but what I'm going to relate, exceeds all I have yet met with: 'Tis this—— In Maidstone *in* Kent, *there is now living a Woman that has* bury'd Nine Husbands and has lately marry'd a Tenth. *She's a brisk, jolly Woman; and considering her Luck in burying of Husbands, may (probably) live to double the Number. Sir, Your Thoughts are desired upon this Occurrence, under the Title* of a House to be let; or, the Widow's Post.—— *I am Yours,* &c.

Dunton's *Answer.*

Sir,

I Received your Remarkable Account of the *Maidstone Widow*, (or House to be let). Ten Times, 'tis said, Sir *John S*—— Shoo'd the Horse round, Mr. *M*—— did the like, and I know of several such Instances: But for a Woman to marry to Ten Husbands, is an Instance that has no Parallel in our Age. 'Tis true, St. *Hierom* tells us that he saw at *Rome* a Woman that had been marry'd to Twenty two Husbands, who afterwards marrying one that had had Twenty Wives, she dyed in his Life-time; whereupon the *Romans* crown'd him with Lawrel in Victory, and caus'd him to carry *a Branch of Palm in his Hand at his Wife's Funeral.* He maketh mention also of another Widow, who of Alms brought up a little Child, and *abused* it *at the Age of Ten Years,* by whom she became great with Child, contrary to the Order of Nature; God so permitting it, to discover the *Vile Uncleanness of that Widow.* Certainly, Second Marriages were a great deal more honourable to such Widows. But if we look back into ancient Times, we find there was hardly a Wdow, amongst the Primitive Christians, that complain'd of Solitariness, or sought Comfort in a second Marriage. *Second Marriage then was counted little better than Adultery.* But I am not of this Opinion: However, all civiliz'd Nations, have by Custom, set a Time between the Death of one Husband, and the Marriage of another. *Numa* made a Law, That no Widow shou'd marry under Ten Months; and if she transgressed, she was to Sacrifice, as for a Crime done. So that *Octavia* cou'd not be marry'd to *Mark Anthony*, till Three Decrees of State had passed to supersede that Law— But in our Times, Husbands can bury their Wives, and Wives their Husbands, with a few counterfeit Tears, and a sowre Visage, masked and painted over with Dissimulation, contracting (like the *Ephesian* Matron) second, ay third, fourth, fifth, ay ten Marriages, (as we see in this *Maidstone*-Widow) before they have worn out their Wedding-Garments. 'Tis true, Widows are allow'd Marriage; and many of them, after they have wept a while, and shed a few Tears to the Memory of the Deceased, throw off their Veils, dry their Eyes, and look out for new Husbands: Perhaps such a Widow as this will keep her Chamber a Month, darken her Room, and admit none but her She-Confidents, who come to chear up her Heart with Sack and Sugar, and tickle her Fancy (as one expresses it) with *Proposals of a New Husband:* (And what a vast Number of such Popolals must this *Maidstone* Widow have, in the marrying of Ten Husbands!) But if any

Stranger

Stranger comes in, then she must sit with a compos'd Countenance, and as mute as if her dead Husband had taken her Tongue along with him. And now she must put her self into decent Mourning, wear a Peak, vow and protest she'll never marry again: And if she be a Person of Quality, then the *Body must lie in State*, and Four or Five *Jack-hold-my-Staffs* stand in their long Sable Cloaks, lest the Devil fetch away poor *Mortuus est* before they can bury him. And now the Noise of a Rich Widow flying about the Town, she's quickly found out by Young Beaus, Rich Usurers, and Wealthy Citizens: And culling out one fit for her Purpose, she vows to him, *She had never any Thoughts of marrying again; but he seeming to be a Person of a pious Character, she knows not what Time, and the Experience of his Love, may produce.* To which he replies, *Heaven knows his Heart, he does not marry her for her Estate, but for the good Opinion he has of her Vertue: Had she ne'er a Farthing in the World, he would have her before all the Women in Nature:* And the next News we hear of 'em, is, The House is let, *i. e. They are marry'd*; and tho' perhaps the Husband may be seiz'd the next Day after for her Debts, yet it matters not; for she has got a *Jointure*, and that *was all she aim'd at.*— But True Love is strong as Death; and a Widow indeed, so loves her Husband, as she won't listen to a Second Match, (or to be sure not till a Year's expired) but pays a Duty to his Funeral Dust. In this imitating the Widow *Hota*, who follow'd her Husband to the Grave, lay'd him in a stately Tomb, and then for Nine Days together she wou'd neither eat nor drink, whereof she died, and was bury'd (as she had order'd in her last Will) by the Side of her beloved Husband.

He first deceas'd, she for a few Days try'd,
To live without him; lik'd it not, and dy'd.

The WIDOW INDEED, thinks her self so nearly link'd in one with her Husband, that she cherishes his Memory, tho' his Person be snatch'd from her, and lay'd up in the gloomy Grave, still his Idea remains with her.—— *Valeria* of *Rome* may serve for a notable Example to Women, who said, *That her Husband dyed to others, but lived to her for ever.*—— A modest Funeral any one bestows; for Decency towards the Dead, is comely and charitable; but 'tis only the Widow-Indeed, that after having bathed her Husband with her Tears, embalms him in her Mind, and gives him there *a Monument lasting as her Life.* If she have Children by him, she keeps them as the dear Pledges of their Conjugal Love, tenderly bringing them up in the Ways of Vertue; and they serve as so many LIVELY PICTURES of her deceased Husband before her Eyes, and are the Dawning Comforts of her Life. —— But I don't hear that HONEST TOBY (the Ninth Husband to our *Maidstone*-Widow) had any Children by her, or that she had any by her other Husbands: So there's the more to be said in Excuse for her marrying so often: But if this Tenth Husband (who is known to the Person that sent me this Account of her) shou'd out-live her, by my Consent, he shall (like the Man that had Twenty Wives) *carry a Branch of Palm in his Hand when he goes to her Funeral.*

Thus, Sir, you have some of my hasty Thoughts on the *Widow* of *Maidstone*, and under your own Title of —— *A House to be let*; *or, the Widows-Post* — I am yours to command, *&c.*

The Post-Devil: *Or, News from* Charon's *Passengers.*

'TWill be necessary that *an Essay upon divers Sorts of Devils*, introduce that News that the World may now and then expect from *Charon*'s Passengers.

He has need of a long Spoon that eats with the Devil, and he had need be as wary *that holds a Candle to him, or sails with his Passengers.* Yet bold *Rothwell* talk'd often with the Devil; and others (like *Rothwell*) have routed him by *Fasting and Prayer.* As weak a Combatant as I am, I hope I shall trap him so (in this *Post-Devil*) as to discover his *Cloven-Foot*: But whether I do or no, he that lists himself for Truth, tho' he fight ill, is sure to be of the Conqueror's Side. 'Tis true, 'tis a bold Attempt for such a Worm as I, to enter the *Lists with Beelzebub*; yet I don't doubt, but (through the Strength of Christ) to be able *to stand against the Wiles of the Devil*; yet I fear I shan't describe this *Familiar Devil* (I call him so, as he appears so often in *Humane Shape*) such as he really is; for the Devil is a wicked Spirit, and Man is only able to comprehend visible Substances; what is invisible and spiritual, he can but guess and rove at. SPIRIT is Word found out for Man to mask his Ignorance in, and what he does not know, he calls it by that Name. But whatever the *Devils* are, they can appear in humane Shapes, (for so they appear'd to *Alice Phillip*)

Phillip) and they ſwarm ev'ry where. The *Thalmudiſts* ſay, *That* Adam *had a Wife, called* Lillis, *before he marry'd* Eve, *and of her he begat nothing but Devils.*— *Leo Swavius*, a *French* Man, will have the Air to be as full of them as Snow falling in the Skies, and that they may be ſeen.— Yea, Devils are ſo numerous, that (if you'll believe *Burton*) *Agrippa*'s Dog had a Devil tied to his Collar; and *Paracelſus* (or elſe *Eraſtus* lyes) had one confin'd to his Sword-Pomel; and others (ſays the ſame Author) *wear them in Rings.*— And as the *Devils are many*, ſo they are of *divers Sorts.*— Some are *Fiery Devils*,— Some *Aerial Devils*, and ſome *Subterranean Devils.*—— *Fiery Devils*, are commonly ſuch as work by *Blazing Stars*, *Fire-Drakes*, or *Ignes Fatui*, which lead Men into Rivers and Lakes, ſaith *Bodin.* Likewiſe they counterfeit *Suns*, *Moons*, and *Stars*, and ſit on Ship-Maſts; St. *Elme*'s *Fires* they commonly call them. Some think they keep their Reſidence in *Hecla*, a Mountain in *Sleland*, *Ætna* in *Sicily*, *Liperta*, *Veſuvius*, &c.—— *Aerial Devils*, are ſuch as keep quarter moſt part in the Air, cauſe many Tempeſts, Thunder and Lightnings; tear Oaks, fire Steeples, Houſes, ſtrike Men and Beaſts; make it rain *Stones*, (as in *Livy*'s Time) *Wool*, *Frogs*, &c. Counterfeits Armies in the Air, ſtrange Noiſes. *Burton* tells us, When *Charles* the Great intended to make a Channel betwixt the *Rhine* and the *Danube*; look! what his Workmen did in the Day, theſe *Aerial Devils* flung down in the Night.— Theſe Aerial Devils cauſe Whirlwinds on a ſudden, and tempeſtuous Storms; which tho' our *Meteorologiſts* refer to natural Cauſes, " I am (ſaith " Mr. *Burton*) of *Bodine*'s Mind, that they are " more often cauſed by theſe *Aerial Devils*; as " when *a deſperate Man makes away with himſelf*, " *dancing and rejoycing at the Death of a Sinner.*— And I find *Pſellus* (a great Obſerver of the Nature of Devils) of this Opinion; for he holds they are Corporeal, and have *Aerial Bodies*; That they are Mortal, live and die, (which *Martianus Capella* likewiſe affirms, but our Chriſtian Philoſophers explode) That they are nouriſh'd, and have Excrements; That they feel Pain, if they be hurt; which *Cardan* confirms, tho' *Scaliger* juſtly laughs him to Scorn for it.— *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and many other Fathers of the Church, alſo hold, That the *Devils* in their Fall had their Bodies changed into a more *Aerial* and groſs Subſtance.—— And *Cardan* relates of his Father, That he conjured up *Seven Devils* in Greek Apparel, ſome ruddy of Complexion, like that mention'd in the Relation: He ask'd them many Queſtions; and they made ready Anſwer, That they were *Aerial Devils*; that they liv'd and dy'd as Men did, ſave that they were longer liv'd, living *Seven or Eight Hundred Years.*—— *Subterranean Devils*, are converſant about the Centre of the Earth, to torture the Souls of Damned Men to the Day of Judgment: Their Egreſs and Regreſs ſome ſuppoſe to be about *Ætna*, *Hyporta*, *Mons*, *Hecla*, *Veſuvius*, *Terra del Fuego*, &c. becauſe many Shrieks and fearful Cries are commonly heard thereabouts, and familiar Apparitions of *dead Men*, *Ghoſts and Goblins.*— Thus have I briefly deſcrib'd the *ſeveral ſorts of Devils* the Learned mention, with this Aſſurance (*to our modern Atheiſts*) That all theſe *Devils* have, by God's Permiſſion, Power over us, as I ſhall prove at large in *The Poſt-Devil continued*, or, *Second Paquet from* Charon's *Paſſengers.*

The Proverbial-Poſt *continued.*

There's no Fence *againſt a* Flail.

Miſers, ſay, can Gold prolong
Life or Health, or keep me young?
Say, can Gold ſuch Wonders do?
Then I'll hoard as faſt as you.
If by Gold I cou'd remain,
Free from Death and free from Pain:
But ſince Pain and Death arrive,
Scorn the Treaſures we can give;
Since no Bribes can make 'em ſtay,
When they once are on their Way,
Why ſhou'd we ſo idly ſave
Gold and Riches for the Grave?
On my Miſtreſs and my Friend,
I my little Store will ſpend;
Rather than with Labour find
Gold, which I muſt leave behind.
There's no Fence againſt a Flail,
If Death ſtrikes it will prevail.

A merry Life and a ſhort one.

I Am born to dye, I know,
And with other Men muſt go;
Be it when, or be it where,
I wou'd fain be merry here:
All the Days which yet are paſt,
Flew away methought in haſte;

What's

What's to come I cannot tell,
But I feign wou'd live 'em well.
Hence with Thoughtfulneſs and Grief,
Care can never bring Relief;
I may many Seaſons paſs,
With my Miſtreſs and my Glaſs,
And as long as Death ſhall ſtay,
I'll do nothing elſe but play.

'Tis ill Jeſting with Edge-Tools.

IN a Garden t'other Day,
Love among the Flowers at play,
By a little Bee was ſtung,
That about the Roſes hung.
Cupid never prick'd before,
Thought his Finger very ſore:
Flying to his Mother's Lap,
Thus he told her his Miſhap:
Help me Mother, help your Son,
I am wounded and undone;
Something which they call a Bee,
Stung my Finger as you ſee:
Quickly let a Salve be found,
For this little Serpent's Wound.
Ah, ſays *Venus*, if a Touch
From a Bee can do ſo much,
Gueſs, my Son, a Lover's Smart,
When your Arrows pierce his Heart.

Love me little, love me long.

(1.)

THe Fire of Love in youthful Blood,
Like what is kindled in Bruſhwood
But for a Moment burns,
Yet in that Moment makes a mighty Noiſe:
It crackles, and to Vapour turns,
And ſoon it ſelf deſtroys.

(2.)

But when krept into aged Veins,
It ſlowly burns, and long remains,
And with a ſullen Heat,
Like Fire in Logs, it glows and warms 'em long;
And tho' the Flame be not ſo great,
Yet is the Heat as ſtrong.

A Lover's Promiſe and Pye-Cruſt, are made to be broke.

I Promis'd *Sylvia* to be true,
Nay, out of Zeal, I ſwore it too:
And that ſhe might believe me more,
Gave her in writing what I ſwore:
Not Vows, nor Oaths can Lovers bind,
So long as bleſs'd, ſo long they're kind:
'Twas in a Leaf, the Wind but blew,
Away both Leaf and Promiſe flew.

The Rhiming-Poſt *continued: Or, more Poems on Subjects deſired.*

The Ideal Beauty.

I.

DAmn'd for ever to complain,
Muſt I court, and court in vain?
Sapho let Intereſt make you kind,
If nothing elſe will do,
Should Conceit, which makes you blind,
Clear theſe Eyes and change my Mind,
What would your Pride come to?

II.

Fooliſh *Sapho* not to know,
Where you all theſe Beauties owe!
The wicked Town won't own thee fair,
Then thank the Man that will;
Beauty you but ſeem to wear;
Beauty's ſelf can ſcarce compare
With Doting Fancy's Skill.

III.

Fancy paints the Nymph Divine,
Thus your very Charms are mine;
'Tis Fancy *Sapho* makes the Chain,
And binds me with the ſame:
But ſhould *Sapho* ſlight my Pain,
Fancy'd turn me looſe again,
And ſpurn the ſcornful Dame.

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